

Ligonier Township Supervisors
Regular Meeting Minutes
August 22, 2023

The Supervisors of Ligonier Township met in regular session at 4:30 p.m. Present were Chair, Dan Resenic; Secretary/Treasurer, Stephanie Verna; Supervisor, D. Scott Matson; and Supervisor, John Beaufort. Vice Chair, Erik Ross was absent.

Also present were Manager, Michael Strelac; Solicitor, Dan Hudock; Engineer, Ben Faas; Zoning / Code Enforcement Officer, Rick Krouse; and Finance Officer, Bethany Caldwell.

Comments from the Public

There were no comments from the public.

Comments from the Supervisors

Supervisor Beaufort – no comment

Supervisor Verna – Suggested that new office chairs be purchased for the board meeting room and that their use be restricted to official meetings. She has a schedule conflict and cannot attend the Planning Commission training on September 21 and asked Mr. Strelac if the training will be recorded. She requested a finance committee meeting be scheduled next week and has availability weekdays after 5:30 p.m. The purpose of this meeting is to review the 5 year budget plan, go over the budget framework, define assumptions, identify both the township's strategy and other information that still needs to be gathered, so that the Finance Committee can put together something to articulate to the rest of the board and the public. The two largest components of the budget are Public Works and Police Departments. The LVPD is working on their own 5 year plan and she asked the Public Works Committee to prepare their own list of equipment needs, anticipated maintenance, etc. Again, assumptions need to be defined - using average costs? Costs per X? How much of an increase over time? The Township should plug these assumptions into the budget and see the results; for example, what percentage of roads will we touch? We need to get clear on the budget numbers and how they present themselves in reality, we need real world planning. We should utilize data from STMP process to guide the budget process. And finally, the Ligonier Country Market is successful and generates a lot of publicity for the area, traffic has increased, the PD are helping, it feels like it is growing bigger. The permit was for 130 vendors, is that number being exceeded? If so, this needs addressed.

Supervisor Matson – no comment

Supervisor Resenic – Agreed with Supervisor Verna's comments regarding the Ligonier Country Market.

- A motion was made by Stephanie Verna and seconded by John Beaufort to approve the minutes from the August 8, 2023 meeting. Motion carried.

Correspondence List (Note these items are not read aloud.)

1. County fiscal audit of Magisterial District Judge Denise Snyder Thiel
2. DQE Communications notice they are applying for a broadband grant
3. Comcast notice they are applying broadband grant
4. Deborah Messer: Patty letter and farm use
5. Deborah Messer: The Comprehensive Plan and Townships
6. Deborah Messer: Wetland and ponds

Additional correspondence regarding gas pipeline safety was distributed to the Board.

Manager Report

Mr. Strelic reported the chip-sealing work will begin August 30, weather permitting - the date gets pushed back every time it rains. The asphalt prep is complete and mowing is wrapping up, but there is still some cold-patching to be done. He reminded the board he will be taking a 2-week vacation starting next week. There was a brief discussion about moving forward with budget planning in his absence.

Engineer Report

Mr. Faas reported he completed a weight limit study on Forbes, Hillside, and Gregg roads and recommended a 10-ton weight limit be posted.

Supervisor Verna asked how long it will take for google maps to be updated. Staff is not sure, but there is a process and the Township has had problems getting Google to update Peters Road. There is a hairpin turn on Peters Road that appears as a normal 90 degree turn. The Township placed signs on the road but they have not prevented trucks from getting stuck at the turn.

Solicitor Report

Mr. Hudock reported he has been working on dissolving the Charlotte / Hi-Acres waterline association and is preparing to file a code complaint.

Staff Reports

Zoning / Code Enforcement - Mr. Krouse noted his report covered 2 months of activity and that he has been following up on all active code complaints.

Finance - the General Fund's Budget vs. Actual report for the month of July was presented.

- A motion was made by Stephanie Verna and seconded by Scott Matson to approve the bills as presented. Motion carried.

Old Business

1. Westmoreland County stormwater grant – no update, but Public Works continues to do stormwater related projects: the latest involves Melville Road, added some latches to help water runoff and dug into the hillside to give the water a channel (instead of sitting on the road surface).

Mr. Strelac noted that there are only two residences on this road and there was a discussion about priorities and how they are determined. Supervisor Matson stated that some township roads have been neglected for years and “band aids,” aren’t going to help.

Supervisor Verna asked the Public Works Committee to put together a plan (take an inventory / assessment of all the roads, make intentional decisions with scopes clearly defined) that could be used by the Financial Committee to create a budget. She asked the Public Works Committee to think of the equipment needs and the roads that need attention. She is tired of hearing things that amount to “it wasn’t the best use of funds” and would like to avoid that going forward. The Board needs to have a plan and staff need leadership to move it forward. She is frustrated the board is having the same conversation, it’s time to change the narrative. Public Works Committee needs to define the work that gets done, and the Finance Committee needs to invest in the capital equipment towards that goal. And she’d like to see the preventative maintenance procedures flushed out – what do the pre & post inspections look like? There is nothing more disgusting than the failure of management for not making this a priority. Stop analyzing things in the past and instead focus on the future. This is not a critique of the crew. It is up to the Board to set the tone.

Supervisor Beaufort contemplated a change in philosophy – We are using ARPA funds to balance next year’s budget. There is a real concern the township will experience an operating deficiency in a few years – we have two choices. Cut services or increase taxes. Perhaps we cut back the maintenance of 20 roads to 10? Maybe we only do one road, but spend the funds to “do it right.”

Supervisor Matson agreed, he’d like to get away from temporary fixes and instead tear the roads up, fix the drainage system underneath and rebuild the roads.

2. The Zoning Hearing Board appointment (term expiring 12/31/27) was tabled since the vacancy is posted until 9/15. Supervisor Verna asked that the board be provided copies of letters of interest and applicants be vetted.

New Business

- A motion was made by John Beaufort and seconded by Scott Matson to approve Resolution 2023-R-20, LSA Westmoreland County grant application. Motion carried.
- A motion was made by Scott Matson and seconded by Stephanie Verna to approve Resolution 2023-R-21, LSA State grant application. Motion carried.
- A motion was made by Stephanie Verna and seconded by John Beaufort to approve Ordinance 2023-O-05, weight limits for Forbes, Hillside, and Gregg roads in Oakwood Hills. Motion carried.

Supervisor Resenic said that Dollar General delivery trucks are taking a short cut through the neighborhood, someone at the corporate office might be able to help communicate the new ordinance to their delivery drivers. Mr. Faas to reach out to them.

LSA grant application submittal on behalf of SAMA (pass-through) – Mr. Srellic informed the Board that SAMA has requested that the Township submit an LSA grant on their behalf as it has been done by a municipality. The request is for funding to remodel / add-on to their building. The Board requested that staff bring more specifics when its time to make a motion.

The Auditor RFP was tabled, please come back to the next meeting with the historical costs. The Board requested that fees be kept flat.

Executive Session

There was no executive session.

Comments from the Public

There were no comments from the public.

Comments from the Supervisors

Supervisor Matson – If the public has complaints, please call the manager so that they can be addressed.

Supervisor Verna – Asked Mr. Strelic to share his office protocol for staff in his absence with the Board before he leaves for vacation.

Supervisor Beaufort – Noted the audit fees keep going up. Do we have money to buy chairs?

- A motion was made by John Beaufort and seconded by Stephanie Verna to amend the agenda to include the subject of purchasing new office chairs. Motion carried.
- A motion was made by John Beaufort and seconded by Stephanie Verna to approve the purchase of 7 new board room chairs not to exceed \$1,500 total and the manager is to enforce a policy that the chairs are to be used for official meeting business only. Motion carried.
- A motion was made by Stephanie Verna and seconded by Dan Resenic to adjourn the meeting at 5:30 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Bethany Caldwell
Assistant Secretary/Treasurer

Ligonier Township - Escrow Account
Bill Payments for All Vendors
August 21, 2023

Vendor	Type	Num	Amount
Aug 21, 23			
Daniel C. Hudock	Bill Pmt -Check	1034	500.00
Aug 21, 23			<u>500.00</u>

GM
Saw ✓
8-22-23

Ligonier Township, Westmoreland County, PA

Bill Payments for All Vendors

August 21, 2023

Vendor	Type	Num	Amount
Aug 21, 23			
Comcast	Bill Pmt -Check	ACH	199.89
AA Septic Tank Service	Bill Pmt -Check	25714	187.50
FIVE Star	Bill Pmt -Check	25715	257.23
Glassmere Fuel Service	Bill Pmt -Check	25716	3,653.24
Hampton Office Products	Bill Pmt -Check	25717	13.63
John Hoffman -v	Bill Pmt -Check	25718	559.00
Ligonier Township Municipal Authority	Bill Pmt -Check	25719	240.00
Ligonier Valley Police Department	Bill Pmt -Check	25720	113,542.83
LVTech	Bill Pmt -Check	25721	1,661.18
Municipal Publications	Bill Pmt -Check	25722	57.50
New Enterprise Stone & Lime Co., Inc.	Bill Pmt -Check	25723	14,125.10
Stewart, McArdle, Sorice, Whalen, Farrell	Bill Pmt -Check	25724	742.50
U.S. Municipal	Bill Pmt -Check	25725	634.00
Aug 21, 23			<u>135,873.60</u>

OK
Saw
8-22-23